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of Veterans Affairs

News Release

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We invite any media interested in interviewing our VA staff to learn more about care and services to contact our Public Affairs Officer at 989-497-2500, extension 13020 or e-mail carrie.seward@va.gov

A Veteran's Smoke-Free Journey – Aleda E. Lutz VA Medical Center

Even at the age of 70 with well over 30 years of smoking, Veteran Ed Haller decided to begin his smoke-free journey. He was informed he needed a medical procedure, and to be cleared for the procedure he would need to be nicotine free. Mr. Haller made the choice that it was time to quit smoking and was referred to Tobacco Cessation from his primary care provider and to our Board-Certified Whole Health Coach. The Whole Health Coach worked with Ed to assist him in further exploring his mission, aspirations, and purpose. Ed reaffirmed his health was more important than smoking, and on April 27, 2019, his voyage to becoming nicotine free began! Meeting with his Whole Health Coach once a week, she shared resources available through the Aleda E. Lutz VA Medical Center to help with reaching his goal. Ed was referred to our Health Behavior Coordinator and he began attending the smoking cessation support group, as well as VA prescribed three-step nicotine patches to assist with weening off the nicotine. Utilizing all the resources and tools available to him, Mr. Haller's self-motivation and assistance from the VA staff, led him to reaching his goal. October 7, 2019, he celebrated 90 days nicotine free and 163 days cigarette free.

The journey to quitting smoking or other nicotine products seems to be rather straight forward but is very different for each person. There are literally thousands of ways to quit, and we all have heard the success and failure stories of each. Quitting smoking is more about cracking your individual quit code. Cracking your code is using all the tools you have heard about, having the right mindset, as well as motivation and timing. However, no tools will help unless you put in the work. Nicotine patches, gum, and lozenges can all be very helpful, but getting these and expecting them to just help you quit is like going to buy a hammer and then waiting for it to build you a house.

On October 1, 2019, the Aleda E. Lutz VA Medical Center, Healthcare Annex, and our Community Based Outpatient Clinics became smoke-free! This national mandate has been instituted at all VA facilities to eliminate the harmful effects of smoking, including exposure to second and third-hand smoke for our Veterans, visitors, and staff. If you are ready to quit smoking, the Aleda E. Lutz VA Medical Center will assist you on your nicotine-free journey. We are looking for motivated individuals who are willing to go on

a similar journey as Mr. Haller and find their own desired nicotine-free destination. Ask your VA provider how to get started at your next visit. Together, we can do this!

The Great American Smokeout is an annual event held on the third Thursday of November. This year's event will be held on November 21 and our medical center will be spreading the word about benefits of quitting cigarettes and the resources to help Veterans and employees start their journeys toward a smoke-free life. Quitting smoking starts with day one. Pick a date today.

The Aleda E. Lutz VAMC in Saginaw, Michigan operates an 81-bed skilled nursing and rehabilitation Community Living Center. It provides care to over 37,400 Veterans in a 35-county geographic area, from mid-Michigan to the Mackinac Bridge. Veterans also receive care at one of our nine VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics located throughout Michigan. More information about this VA can be found at www.saginaw.va.gov.

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